

**Security Council**

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Letter dated 11 April 2018 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to refer to the deliberations that took place in the Security Council on 10 April 2018 regarding the ongoing allegations of the use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic.

In that regard, I write to express my deep disappointment that the Security Council was unable to agree upon a dedicated mechanism to attribute responsibility for the use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic.

I reiterate my outrage at reports of the use of such weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic. I also reiterate my strong condemnation of the use of chemical weapons. Any confirmed use of chemical weapons, by any party to the conflict, is abhorrent, reprehensible and a clear violation of international law.

The seriousness of the most recent allegations regarding the use of chemical weapons in Duma (Eastern Ghutah) clearly warrants an impartial, objective and independent investigation, using professional expertise. I therefore reaffirm my support for the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) and its fact-finding mission, which is tasked with establishing the facts surrounding allegations of the use of toxic chemicals as weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic.

OPCW has already received and responded positively to a request to deploy a team of the fact-finding mission. Accordingly, preparations, including security support provided by the United Nations, are well under way for the arrival of the team in the Syrian Arab Republic. The fact-finding mission must be granted full access, without restrictions or impediments, in order that it may carry out its activities.

Ensuring accountability for a confirmed use of chemical weapons is our responsibility, not least to the victims of such attacks. A lack of accountability emboldens those who would use such weapons by providing them with the reassurance of impunity. This, in turn, further weakens the norm proscribing the use of chemical weapons and the international disarmament and non-proliferation architecture as a whole.

I urge all Member States to act responsibly in these dangerous circumstances. I appeal to the Security Council to fulfil its duties and not to give up on efforts to agree upon a dedicated, impartial, objective and independent mechanism for attributing responsibility with regard to the use of chemical weapons. I stand ready to support such efforts.

I should be grateful if you could bring the present letter to the attention of the members of the Security Council.

(Signed) António Guterres

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